

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 02850 090556Z

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ACTION AGRE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

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SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 PA-01 PRS-01 /089 W

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R 070930Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC7424

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN AFIN ALOW EIND ECON LA

SUBJECT: LAO MARKET CONDITIONS

REF: VIENTIANE 2718

1. EMBASSY MARKET SURVEY OF NOVEMBER 30 SHOWED THAT BEEF AGAIN WAS NOT AVAILABLE. IT HAD NOT BEEN SOLD IN MARKET NOVEMBER 17, AS REPORTED

REFTEL, BUT THEN HAD REAPPEARED IN SMALL QUALITIES NOVEMBER 24. FROM NOVEMBER 17 TO NOVEMBER 30, CHICKEN ROSE FROM 1500 TO 2000 KIP A HEAD AND BUFFALO FROM 1300 TO 1400 KIP PER KILO WHILE PORK DROPPED FROM 1500 TO 1400 KIP PER KILO. LOCAL EMPLOYEE CONDUCTING THE SURVEY REPORTED THAT THERE WAS ABOUT HALF AS MUCH MEAT AVAILABLE IN FREE MARKET NOVEMBER 30 AS IN PREVIOUS TWO WEEKS. MOREOVER, NONE WAS AVAILABLE AT THE LOW GOVERNMENT SET PRICE BECAUSE THE DEALERS DESIGNATED BY THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO BUY CATTLE TO SLAUGHTER.

2. NOVEMBER 30 SURVEY SHOWED THAT THE PRICE OF FIRST AND SECOND QUALITY WHITE RICE DROPPED FROM 350 AND 250 KIP PER KILO TO 250 AND 200 KIP PER KILO RESPECTIVELY SINCE SURVEY OF NOVEMBER 17. THIRD

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 02850 090556Z

QUALITY WHITE RICE INCREASED FROM 130 KIP TO 140 KIP PER KILO WHILE

FIRST QUALITY GLUTINOUS RICE ROSE FROM 70 TO 80 KIP PER KILO.

3. DURING SAME PERIOD, MOST VEGETABLES ROSE IN PRICE; TOMATOES FROM 1000 TO 1200 KIP PER KILO, LAO POTATOES FROM 600 TO 900, STRING BEANS FROM 150 TO 200, AND GREEN PEPPERS FROM 500 TO 1000. EGGS REMAINED AT 10 FOR 100 KIP. THE PRICE OF SUGAR DROPPED FROM 350 TO 300 KIP PER KILO AND LAO GROUND COFFEE FROM 1300 TO 905 KIP PER KILO.

4. NEARLY ALL DRY GOODS STORES PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT PRICE LIST DISTRIBUTED ABOUT NOVEMBER 20. LAO SHOPPERS, HOWEVER, TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE LIST IS MEANINGLESS BECAUSE MANY ITEMS SUCH AS LIGHT BULBS AND BATTERIES ARE EITHER UNAVAILABLE OR CAN ONLY BE PURCHASED AT MUCH HIGHER BLACK MARKET PRICES.

5. TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL DAY ON DECEMBER 1, 2, AND 3 THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGED FARMERS AND MERCHANTS TO SELL FOOD AT ESPECIALLY LOW PRICES SUCH AS BUFFALO MEAT FOR 400 KIP A KILO, FISH FOR 200 KIP, AND ORANGES FOR 150 KIP PER KILO WHILE CHICKEN SOLD FOR 200 KIP A HEAD. VARIOUS KINDS OF VEGETABLES SOLD FOR 15 KIP PER KILO. IN FACT, HOWEVER, FEW PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HOLIDAY SALES BECAUSE STOCKS WERE LOW AND LINES WERE LONG.
BROH-KAHN

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